



Making it Better
CREATING A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY TOGETHER

EBT and Market Bucks at Farmers Markets Help Residents Eat Healthier

Did You Know?

In 2012, more than 24 farmers markets across Minnesota offered EBT and Market Bucks, compared to only one in 2006



Overview

As part of the Communities Putting Prevention to Work initiative, the Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support (MDHFS) invested in strategies to expand the availability of Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) at Minneapolis farmers markets. EBT at farmers markets is a strategy that shows promise in increasing access to healthy, locally grown foods for residents participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as 'food stamps'). Offering EBT at farmers markets also benefits local growers and the local economy by generating income and circulating money back into the community.

Starting in 2010, MDHFS launched EBT for the first time at two Minneapolis farmers markets and supported the continuation of EBT at a third. Working with partners, MDHFS also created the "Market Bucks" incentive program to double customer purchasing power by matching the first \$5 spent. In addition, a coordinated promotional campaign raised awareness about EBT and Market Bucks.

EBT and Market Bucks expanded to two additional markets in 2011 and one more in 2012, bringing the total number of participating Minneapolis markets up to six (eight actual locations).

Results and Accomplishments

Since 2010, participating Minneapolis markets have generated over \$70,000 in EBT sales and more than \$20,000 in Market Bucks redemptions, serving over 1,600 unique customers. Customer surveys conducted at each market indicated that:

- 85% said the quality of produce at markets was as good as or better than the grocery store.
- 75% said the price of produce at markets was the same as or cheaper than the grocery store.
- 91% reported that they eat more fruits and veggies as a result of being able to use EBT at the markets.

EBT customers have welcomed the program saying “I look forward to going to the market every week” and “I’ve made many meals prepared completely with food from the farmers market and purchased with EBT. I feel great about feeding my family this way!”

Synergies

Other communities across the state are implementing similar EBT systems at urban, suburban, and rural farmers markets. In 2012, 24 markets across Minnesota offered EBT and Market Bucks, significantly increasing the number of low-income individuals who were able to purchase affordable fresh produce and other healthy foods.

Future Plans

MDHFS and other partners will continue to work on the long-term goals of expanding EBT to all Minneapolis markets and developing a streamlined and sustainable system that would alleviate many of the financial and administrative burdens on individual markets offering EBT.

For additional EBT and Market Bucks reports and resources, please visit:

http://www.minneapolismn.gov/health/cppw/dhfs_ebt

For more information, contact:

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